

Table 1
Leading Causes of Death Among
American Indians in North Carolina, 2008

Rank	Cause of Death	Number of Deaths
1	Cancer	145
2	Diseases of the heart	142
3	Other unintentional injuries	38
4	Motor vehicle injuries	35
5	Diabetes mellitus	31
6	Cerebrovascular disease	28
7	Homicide	25
8	Alzheimer's disease	22
9	Kidney diseases	21
10	Chronic lung diseases	18
	All other causes (residual)	194
	Total Deaths—All Causes	699

the Lumbee Act (HR 4656) which provided federal recognition of the Lumbee tribe, but did not include health services for the Lumbee by the Indian Health Service.

Social and Economic Well-Being

Low income, low educational level, and unemployment all are associated with a higher rate of health problems. The percentage of American Indian families living below the federal poverty level (\$21,834 annual income for a family of four) in 2008 was 21.2 percent, compared to 6.7 percent for whites and 21.3 percent for African Americans. Approximately 29 percent of American Indian family households were headed by females, compared to 13 percent for white family households and 44 percent for African American family households. Thirty-eight percent of the family households headed by American Indian females lived in poverty, compared to 25 percent of the family households headed by white females and 37 percent by African American females. More than 58 percent of American Indian adults (ages 25 and older) had a high

school education or less, compared to 40 percent for whites.² The unemployment rate for American Indians was 7.5 percent, compared to 5.4 percent for whites.²

Mortality

Table 1 shows the leading causes of death for American Indians in North Carolina in 2008.

Cancer, heart disease, and other unintentional injuries are the top three causes of death, compared to heart disease, cancer, and chronic lower respiratory diseases for the white population. Motor vehicle injuries (fourth) and homicide (seventh) rank substantially higher as causes of death among American Indians than among whites (10th and 19th, respectively).

Table 2 shows 2004–2008 age-adjusted death rates (deaths per 100,000 population) for major causes of death, comparing American Indians, whites, and African Americans. **American Indian death rates were at least twice that of whites for diabetes, HIV disease, motor vehicle injuries, and homicide.**

Table 2
Age-Adjusted Death Rates* for Major Causes of Death by
Race/Ethnicity, North Carolina Residents, 2004–2008

Cause of Death	American Indian	White	African American
Chronic Conditions			
Heart disease	207.7	192.6	236.0
Cancer	166.4	185.2	224.0
Stroke	54.6	49.2	73.5
Diabetes	45.0	19.5	51.0
Chronic lung disease	30.1	51.1	30.4
Kidney disease	23.5	14.8	36.5
Chronic liver disease	11.8	9.3	8.4
Infectious Diseases			
Pneumonia/influenza	13.5	20.2	19.2
Septicemia	17.1	12.3	22.3
HIV disease	2.9	1.2	16.5
Injury and Violence			
Motor vehicle injuries	39.0	18.1	18.0
Other unintentional injuries	30.9	30.9	21.8
Homicide	20.4	3.6	16.4
Suicide	9.5	14.4	5.0

* Rates are age-adjusted to the 2000 U.S. standard population and are expressed as deaths per 100,000 population—using underlying cause of death.